

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00490 020157Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSY-02 /082 W

-----021135Z 021951 /17

R 011422Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5897

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE CALLS

FOR CHANGES IN DOMESTIC POLICY, BUT IS DEEMED

LOYAL NAT

1. SUMMARY: FOELOF F. "PIK" BOTHA WILL BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER ON APRIL 1. THE ENGLISH PRESS AND MANY LIBERALS EXPECT HIM TO EXERCISE A VERLIGTE INFLUENCE IN THE CABINET. BUT HE HAS NO DOMESTIC POWER BASE, OWES HIS ADVANCEMENT TO HAVING CARRIED OUT THE HARD-SELL LINE PREFERRED BY THE NATIONAL PARTY, AND ENTERS THE CABINET AS THE MOST JUNIOR MINISTER. WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN INFLUENCE SAG POLICY IN A LIBERAL DIRECTION REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00490 020157Z

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. UPON ARRIVAL FROM THE UNITED STATES MARCH 27, FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE PIK BOTHA TOLD NEWSMEN AT THE AIRPORT THAT ALTHOUGH SOUTH AFRICA'S DOMESTIC POLICIES WOULD NEVER BE DICTATED BY INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES, ADJUSTMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE TO ASSURE THAT DOMESTIC PRACTICES ARE DEFENSIBLE ON THE WORLD FORUM. BOTHA DID

NOT ELABORATE FURTHER. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION TO THE EFFECT THAT BOTHA'S ACCESSION TO THE CABINET MIGHT RESULT IN MORE ENLIGHTENED POLICIES, SINCE HE IS GENERALLY TAKEN TO BE ONE OF THE VERLIGTE GROUP. THE ENGLISH PRESS HAS PARTICULARLY TAKEN THIS TACK, NOTING THAT BOTHA HAS BEEN IN THE EMBARRASSING POSITION OF HAVING TO EXPLAIN TO THE UN AND OTHERS WHY SOUTH AFRICA APPEARS TO HAVE CHANGED SO LITTLE AFTER VORSTER'S NOW FAMOUS "GIVE US SIX MONTHS" SPEECH. BOTHA IS EXPECTED TO BE AN EXPONENT OF LIBERALIZING CHANGES PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF HIS BELIEF THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY IN SAG SELF-INTEREST BOTH TO AVOID ADDITIONAL PRESSURES FROM THE WEST, AND TO STIMULATE NEW CONFIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA IN A WAY THAT WILL ATTRACT INVESTORS.

4. SOME NATIONALISTS, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE FACT THAT BOTHA HAS THE VERLIGTE IMAGE, POINT OUT THAT, WHILE MOST KEY MINISTERS ARE HIGH OFFICERS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PROVINCIAL PARTY COUNCILS, AND THUS HAVE SOMETHING OF A POWER BASE, BOTHA IS A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT WHO HAS NO DOMESTIC POLITICAL BASE AND NO PARTY OFFICE. THEY NOTE, MOREOVER, THAT BOTHA GOT HIS POSITION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE US LARGELY BECAUSE NP LEADERS CONCLUDED THAT A MORE ACTIVE, HARD-SELL MAN WAS REQUIRED IN THAT POSITION. BOTHA REPORTEDLY HAS, IN VORSTER'S EYES, DONE A VERY GOOD JOB. HOWEVER WELL BOTHA MANY NOW BE ABLE TO INTERPRET AMERICAN OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL VIEWS TO THE KEY SAG DECISION-MAKERS, HE IS IN THE CABINET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00490 020157Z

MORE AS A PROFESSIONAL EXPERT THAN AS A LEADER OF SOUTH AFRICAN OPINION. NATS POINT OUT THAT THE DOMINANT VOICE OF AFRIKANERDOM IS STILL VERY CONSERVATIVE, AND THAT EVEN IF BOTHA MAY BE QUITE PERSUASIVE, NAT LEADERS WILL STILL TEND TO LISTEN FIRST AND FOREMOST TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS. BOTHA WILL BE THE JUNIOR MINISTER, BUT HIS POST IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, AND HE APPEARS TO HAVE EARNED VORSTER'S CONFIDENCE. WHETHER OR NOT HIS VOICE WILL HAVE ANY PERSUASIVE LIBERALIZING EFFECT REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION. BOWDLER

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NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PDIP, SF, (BOTH, PIK)  
**To:** STATE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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